

SENATE—Wednesday, March 29, 2000

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Loving Father, You open Your heart to us. You assure us of Your unqualified, unlimited love. In spite of all the changes in our lives, You never change. We hear Your assurance, "I love you. I will never let you go. You are mine. I have you chosen and called you to know, love, and serve Me."

In response, we open our hearts to You. We choose to be chosen. We accept Your love and forgiveness and turn our lives over to Your control. We confess anything we have said or done that deserves Your judgment. Cleanse our memories of any failure that would haunt us today and give us the courage to act on the specific guidance You have given that we have been reluctant to put into action. We commit to You our families, friends, and those with whom we work. Help us to communicate Your creative delight in each person's uniqueness and potential.

We dedicate today's work in the Senate. Bless the Senators with a renewed sense of Your presence, a rededication to their calling to serve You and our Nation, and a reaffirmation of their dependence on You. You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WAYNE ALLARD, a Senator from the State of Colorado, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today the Senate will resume consideration of the pending flag desecration resolution for 30 minutes prior to a cloture vote on the resolution. Therefore, Senators can anticipate the cloture vote to occur at approximately 10 a.m. Following the vote, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m. with the time under the control of

Senators BROWBACK, COVERDELL, and DURBIN.

It is hoped an agreement regarding final passage of the flag resolution can be made so that the vote can occur during today's session. As a reminder, cloture on the motion to proceed to the gas tax legislation was filed on Tuesday, and that vote will occur on Thursday at a time to be determined. Also on Thursday, the Senate is expected to begin consideration of the loan guarantees legislation.

I thank all Members for their attention.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S.J. RES. 43

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I understand there is a joint resolution at the desk due for its second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 43) expressing the sense of the Congress that the President of the United States should encourage free and fair elections and respect for democracy in Peru.

Mr. HATCH. I object to further proceeding on the resolution at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The resolution will be placed on the calendar.

FLAG DESECRATION CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT—Resumed

Mr. HATCH. I ask unanimous consent that the oversized posters we use this morning be permitted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, during the past 2 days, we have heard several Senators who oppose the flag desecration amendment speak about the American flag as only a symbol or a piece of cloth that should not be confused with the real freedoms that we as Americans enjoy. They want to know why we get so worked up over a symbol, a mere piece of cloth. They want to know why we should care if someone urinates or defecates on the American flag. They ask: Aren't we strong enough as a nation to overlook such behavior?

The U.S. flag is a lot more than a symbol and a lot more than a piece of cloth. Don't take my word for it. Listen to the story of how Mike Christian feels about the American flag. Mike Christian was one of Senator JOHN MCCAIN's cellmates at the "Hanoi Hilton" during the Vietnam war. He sewed an American flag on the inside of his

shirt, and he often led his prisoners of war in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. One day, his captors found that flag and they beat him severely for possessing it. Despite the risk of even more life-threatening abuse, Mr. Christian sharpened a little piece of bamboo into a needle and painstakingly made another flag out of bits of cloth. His new flag, and the heroics it inspired, helped the other American prisoners survive their prolonged captivity under brutal conditions.

If a makeshift flag can stir such emotions, it is illogical for the Senate to ignore the feelings of the overwhelming number of Americans who support flag protection. The flag is not just a piece of cloth or a symbol. It is the embodiment of our heritage, our liberties, and indeed our sovereignty as a nation. The American flag unites Americans because it embodies shared values and history.

Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the U.S. and allied forces during the gulf war, summed this up eloquently in his letter supporting the flag amendment. General Schwarzkopf wrote:

We are a diverse people living in a complicated fragmented society. I believe we are imperiled by a growing cynicism by certain traditions that bind us, particularly service to our Nation. The flag remains the single preeminent connection to each other and to our country. Legally sanctioning flag desecration only serves to undermine this national unity and identity which must be preserved.

That was General Schwarzkopf, one of the great heroes of our country.

I have a few flags that will help illustrate what the flag means to our shared history. These flags tell part of the story of how this Nation we all call ours came to be so great.

The flag with the circle of 13 stars was the first official flag of the United States. It was adopted by an act of Congress on June 14, 1777. According to legend, a group headed by George Washington came up with this design and commissioned seamstress Betsy Ross to execute it for presentation to Congress. It is a beautiful flag.

Let me go to the next flag. This design is believed by many authorities to be the stars and stripes used by the American land troops during the Revolutionary War. A flag such as this was flown over the military stores at Bennington, VT, on August 16, 1777, when Gen. John Stark's militia led Americans to victory over a British raiding force. The original of that flag is preserved in the Bennington, VT, museum.

The 15 stars and 15 stripes design was adopted prior to the War of 1812 after